



GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FRENCH GRADE XI

ORAL EVALUATION

Division of Instruction
Department of Education

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FRENCH GRADE XI

ORAL EVALUATION

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FOREWORD

This document contains some guidelines and techniques to aid you in the preparation and administration of formal oral tests. These are suggested approaches to oral evaluation which may be adapted to suit your particular situation. The major purpose of this short paper is to highlight the importance of the oral skill in our French Programme and to ensure it receives the attention it deserves in classroom teaching and evaluation. The focus of the document is primarily on summative evaluation, that is, testing for the purpose of grading and is intended to complement the continuous evaluation process normally carried out by the teacher. I sincerely hope that the contents of this paper will be of some benefit to you in organizing for oral testing.


Honourable Wallace House,
Minister of Education.

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Introduction

In the present Provincial French Programme, and in most current French courses, objectives deal mainly with skills development, namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Recently, considerable discussion about oral French and the desirability of high school students being able to communicate, at least, in basic conversational situations, has led to an overall emphasis on communicative competence.

While it is generally agreed that the development of student ability to communicate, in French, is a desirable outcome, it seems that oral competency is secondary to Listening, Reading, and Writing in the second language classroom. This is likely because, among other things, these skills are more easily presented to students and also more easily evaluated. Furthermore, it is a well-established fact that programme objectives when not tested in examinations, usually become de-emphasized, in the teaching/learning process.

Class size and the more individualized nature of oral skill development require that a considerable amount of class time and energy be devoted to student practice for refinement and perfection of spoken French. With the overall priority of our present French Programme being communicative competence, an important amount of classroom time must be provided for this aural-oral development. Concomitant with this in-class emphasis, evaluation procedures must be established to ensure that stated programme objectives are being achieved.

ORAL EVALUATION (School level)

Passeport Français sets out the oral skill as the most important to be mastered - this is evident in the multiple and variety of exercises recommended to be completed orally. Listening, of course, is a primary step in oral development and cannot be separated from it. Lisons and Ecrivons, in Passeport Français, are structured to reinforce the development of oral competency.

It seems there are two possibilities for oral evaluation: a subjective assessment of student achievement by simply judging each individual's oral production, on a periodic basis, or a formal oral test administered two to three times a year based on a teacher-student interview. Some problems inherent in the informal assessment are:

1. It is difficult to recall each individual student's performance over a period of time when assigning grades.
2. Other events and occurrences, in the school, make it difficult to assess on a regular basis.
3. Since the assessment is subjective, it is difficult to account for the student's grades on oral production.
4. Both teachers and students tend to overlook the importance of the oral skill as it is not formally evaluated and thus, is less emphasized

than Listening, Reading and Writing.

Formal assessment of oral production, at least twice yearly (mid-term and year-end), by means of an interview tends to overcome the above problems; however, it does entail a fair degree of organization and requires the co-operation of other staff members and the school principal. The French teacher will need to prepare a number of similar items of comparable difficulty for each test question such that no two students will necessarily have the same test. An answer sheet will also be required, one for every student, on which the teacher records each score obtained. An interview should last approximately five to eight minutes and should follow a standard testing procedure to be maintained throughout the testing session. It is recommended that the oral test be scheduled, if possible, during the regular examination period, at mid-term, and during the finals, for Grade 10, at year-end. Otherwise, it might be advisable to carry out the test outside of regular class time. While oral interviews are in progress, students should be supervised to prevent discussions as to the contents of the test.

It is easy to see that considerable preparation is necessary for oral testing; however, if we bear in mind the importance of the oral skill in the total programme and realize that the inadequacies of periodic rating of student oral production are overcome by such testing, it is well worth

the effort.

The teacher would still obtain feedback on students' oral competency throughout the school year. One means of doing this is by rating students on the basis of periodic classroom observations. See Appendix A for a suggested rating scale. This would serve to indicate to students that they are continually being evaluated, would provide feedback to the teacher regarding students' performance, and provide a basis for discussion of student oral progress with parents.

A Suggested Plan for a School Evaluation

For the purposes of this discussion, the School Evaluation equals 100%. The following division of the School 100% is recommended:

Listening:	15%
Oral:	40%
Reading:	15%
Writing:	20%
Awareness of French Civilization and Culture:	10%
<u>Total:</u>	100%

Forty per cent (40%) should be given for evaluation of the oral skill as sole responsibility for this aspect of language development and evaluation rests with each individual school. This could be administered through two formal oral tests with a value of 20% each. It is also important that schools give adequate attention to Listening, Reading and Writing. This would be done with the values indicated for evaluation of these skills. An awareness of French Civilization and Culture should also constitute a portion of the school evaluation. This aspect, though important in the language learning process, is not presently evaluated in the departmental examination. Ten per cent (10%) seems sufficient weight for cultural awareness which can be developed by means of class and individual projects and evaluated through a variety of techniques.

In comparing unit tests and formal examinations for other than the oral skill, it is recommended that teachers utilize the following values for the various sections of the test or examination:

Listening	30%
Reading	30%
Writing	40%

This would permit a ready transfer of unit and formal exam scores to a total out of 100% for the school's shared evaluation.

Suggested Techniques Oral Testing

Development of the oral skill in the second language class demands a great deal of attention and practice. A student must be able to decode a message and respond intelligently to that message in a very short time span, for normal conversation. Given the amount of exposure to French and the degree of practice students receive to develop their oral competency, it is not unusual to find that students are unable to participate in conversation without some guidelines as to topics, vocabulary and structures etc. and some previous preparation. For these reasons and because oral testing should be a positive learning experience for students, the techniques to be listed below are somewhat limited in scope. It must be remembered however that students have a very limited exposure to French and do not usually get the amount of practice necessary for a higher degree of proficiency.

According to Lado, in Language Testing, listing the oral production problems, encountered by students, is the first step in oral evaluation. This means, in an oral test, it is unnecessary to evaluate every word, uttered by the student, because many of the sounds in French are similar to English sounds. It is sufficient to isolate contrasting sounds in the two languages to determine if indeed the student has mastered the language sounds unique to French. Another related point before providing some sample questions: key sounds to be tested should be incorporated into typical language patterns and the teacher


should listen for the correct pronunciation of only that sound isolated for evaluation.

Sample Techniques

Directions: Each student is required to read a number of sentences in French. The student is evaluated on certain sounds or aspects predetermined by the teacher.

Note: Ideally, these sentences would be recombinations of previously learned material. The aspects to be evaluated are scored 1 if correct, 0 if incorrect.

Part One: Teacher's Key

1. Je cherche mes amies (liaison)
0 1
2. Est-ce que tout le monde va à la campagne? (pronun-
ciation) 0 1
3. Tu connais ce garçon -là? (intonation) 
0 1
4. J'attends l'autobus (elision)
0 1
5. Les petits amis d'Henri sont allés au cinéma (liaison)
0 1

Intonation, elision, pronunciation, and liaison are tested in Part One.

To prevent one student from aiding another by providing information as to the contents of the test, a teacher should

prepare several sheets of items of similar difficulty. This
will be true for all items on the oral test.

Part Two:

Directions: Each student is asked to read a short passage of recombined materials. In addition to testing the techniques presented in Part One, fluency is also evaluated.

Teacher's Key:

Ma nièce est plus vieille qu'Henriette. C'est une fillle
01 01 0 1 01

intelligentete mais ses notes ne sont pas bonnes. Elle
01 01

ne travaille lle pas parce qu'elle préfère passer son temps
01 0 1 01

à la campagne.
0 1

Fluency	1	2	3	4	5
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Part Three:

Directions: Each student is read a list of sentences one by one and is required to replace the subject by an indicated subject and make any other necessary changes.

Note: Other than the indicated change, only one other change per sentence should be required.

Teacher's Key:

1. Student hears: Je travaille cet après-midi (nous)

Student must say: Nous travaillons cet après-midi.

0 1

2. Student hears: Elle attend l'arrivée de l'autobus (Je)

Student must say: J'attends l'arrivée de l'autobus.

0 1

3. Student hears: Nous perdons toujours à la Loterie

Atlantique (Ils)

Student must say: Ils perdent toujours à la Loterie

0 1

Atlantique.

4. Student hears: Tu gagnes le prix! (Vous)

Student must say: Vous gagnez le prix!

0 1

5. Student hears: Elle a des disques pour vous (Nous)

Student must say: Nous avons des disques pour vous.

0 1

Note: The types of oral testing techniques to be presented now are somewhat more difficult to evaluate because they are less directed (student responses can vary) and they usually involve more than one aspect of the language at a time.

Part Four:

Directions: Students are given a comprehensive list of general questions to prepare for the oral test. The teacher would select several questions, of similar difficulty for each student to which the student must reply. Please consult Appendix B for some sample questions. Accuracy of information, fluency, and pronunciation can be evaluated in this manner. For this technique,

it is recommended to use a marking scale with gradations of correctness. Example:

Four Categories

- 0 no response: partial incomprehensible response.
- 1 poor: total response but unacceptable results.
- 2 fair but with definite faults.
- 3 good but not quite perfect.
- 4 perfect performance.

Teacher's Key:

- 1. 0 1 2 3 4
- 2. 0 1 2 3 4
- 3. 0 1 2 3 4
- 4. 0 1 2 3 4
- 5. 0 1 2 3 4

Part Five:

Directions: Each student gives a short talk (two or three minutes) on a previously prepared topic. This technique can be graded with regard to content, fluency, and pronunciation.

Teacher's Key:

Content	1 2 3 4 5
Fluency	1 2 3 4 5
Pronunciation	1 2 3 4 5

Part Six:

Directions: Each student describes a picture or the story of a picture which has been prepared in advance. Content, fluency, and pronunciation would be the aspects evaluated in this question type.

Teacher's Key:

Content	1	2	3	4	5
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Fluency	1	2	3	4	5
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Pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
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Directions may be provided orally to students or written on the student sheet.

Students should be intimately familiar with the questions types to constitute the test and should be counselled as to how best to prepare for the evaluation and to conduct themselves during it. These are important points and should be stressed to students.

FRENCH ORAL TEST

Student sheet

Name _____

Part One: 1. Je cherche mes amies.

2. Est-ce que tout le monde va à la campagne?

3. Tu connais ce garçon-là?

4. J'attends l'autobus.

5. Les petits amis d'Henri sont allés au cinéma.

Part Two:

Ma nièce est plus vieille qu'Henriette. C'est une fille intelligente mais ses notes ne sont pas bonnes. Elle ne travaille pas parce qu'elle préfère passer son temps à la campagne.

Part Three:

1. (nous)

2. (je)

3. (ils)

4. (vous)

5. (nous)

The techniques presented have been adapted from Valette, Modern Language Testing and Lado, Language Testing. Teachers

should consult these authors for additional information and related testing techniques.

APPENDIX A

Oral Evaluation Rating Scale

Unit _____

Student's Name	Pronunciation (General)				Rhythm (Stress)	Intonation	Directed Discourse				Free Discourse				Oral Reading
	Liaison	Elision					Repetition	Substitution	Transformation		General Fluency	Accuracy			

In the Oral Evaluation Rating Scale, substitution means replacing one item, usually lexical, for another with no other changes occurring in the sentence. For example: Student hears: La pomme est rouge.

Student hears: Le chapeau.

Student says: Le chapeau est rouge.

Transformation means replacing one item in a sentence which causes

other changes in the sentence. For example:

Student hears: Le cheval est grand.

Student hears: Les chevaux.

Student says: Les chevaux sont grands.

In obtaining feedback, the teacher can rate students on a scale of 1-3.

- 1 poor, unacceptable
- 2 good, but not perfect
- 3 excellent

APPENDIX B

Suggestions for Evaluation:

Group A (Non-extemporaneous)

1. Oral questions on readings, dialogues etc.
2. Oral presentations in class (prepared in advance and delivered from notes or memory).
3. Simple questions on such things as Canadian geography and history, political leaders, actors, sports figures etc. (These topics would have been discussed in class).
4. Simple questions and discussions on items of current interest in the school. (Plays, games, exams, etc.)

Group B (Extemporaneous)

1. Student's personal life (name, age, date and place of birth, brothers and sisters, etc.).
2. Students' interests (sports, movies, books, television, music, etc.).
3. Describing pictures, scenes, etc.
4. Oral presentations in class on simple topics.
5. Questions on general topics such as weather, seasons, dates, activities, etc.
6. Simple greetings and questions involving health.

Simple Questions for Oral Exams.

1. Comment vous appelez-vous?

2. Quel âge avez-vous?
3. Quand êtes-vous né?
4. Où êtes-vous né?
5. Où demeurez-vous? Décrivez votre maison.
6. Avez-vous des frères (des soeurs)?
Comment s'appellent-ils (elles)?
Vont-ils (elles) à l'école? Quelle école?
7. Votre père, quelle sorte de travail fait-il?
8. Quels sports aimez-vous?
9. Aimez-vous le cinéma? Avez-vous vu un bon film récemment? Racontez-moi l'histoire du film.
10. Est-ce que vous lisez beaucoup? Quelle sorte de livre?
11. Quels sont vos passe-temps?
12. Aimez-vous la musique moderne? Quel est votre chanteur favori?
13. Combien de provinces y a-t-il au Canada?
14. Quelle est la plus grande province? La plus petite?
15. Dans quel pays est-ce qu'on parle français?
16. Qui est le premier ministre du Canada, du Québec, de Terre-Neuve?
17. Quelle est la capitale de Terre-Neuve?
18. Quelle est l'industrie principale de Terre-Neuve?
19. De quelle couleur est votre chemise? (pantalon, etc.)
20. Dites-moi de (faire quelque chose).
21. Décrivez cette photo.

22. Qu'aimeriez-vous faire si vous étiez riche?
23. Qu'allez-vous faire pendant les vacances?
24. Décrivez un voyage que vous avez fait.
25. Quel temps fait-il au mois de janvier?
26. Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un facteur?
27. A quelle heure vous levez-vous le matin?
28. Comment allez-vous? (Comment ça va?)
29. Imaginez que vous êtes en retard pour les classes.
Dites-moi pourquoi vous êtes en retard.
30. Quelle est votre saison favorite? Pourquoi?

APPENDIX C

Suggested Project Topics

1. Movements in French Literature.
2. A French author, poet, playwright.
3. A French Canadian author, poet, playwright.
4. Some aspect of French or French Canadian history.
5. French and French Canadian artists.
6. French Canadians.
7. French and French Canadian music (modern and classical).
8. French Cuisine.
9. Separation in Quebec.
10. French Canadian Cuisine.
11. Montreal.
12. Quebec City.
13. Paris.
14. Comparisons of French and French Canadian speech.
15. History of St. Pierre and Miquelon.
16. French Canadian areas outside Quebec.
17. The French-speaking population of Newfoundland.
18. Holiday customs and celebrations.
19. French slang.
20. René Levesque.

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